



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Mall and Memorial Parks
900 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024



Record of Determination to Close National Mall and Memorial Parks to the Launching, Landing, or Operation of Unmanned Aircraft

Launching, landing, or operating an unmanned aircraft from or on lands and waters administered by the National Park Service within the boundaries of the National Mall and Memorial Parks is prohibited except as approved in writing by the superintendent.

The term "unmanned aircraft" means a device that is used or intended to be used for flight in the air without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the device, and the associated operational elements and components that are required for the pilot or system operator in command to operate or control the device (such as cameras, sensors, communication links). This term includes all types of devices that meet this definition (e.g., model airplanes, quadcopters, drones) that are used for any purpose, including for recreation or commerce.

This restriction covers all areas within National Mall and Memorial Parks, including the monumental core as well as all other parklands, such as the uptown parks, circles, squares and reservations.

The National Mall and Memorial Parks is one of the most visited of the 401 parks in the National Park System. The monuments and memorials commemorating the lives of those who contributed to this nation, such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, as well as world events, including World War II and Vietnam, draw close to 30 million of visitors each year. The park is the stage for special events such as the Cherry Blossom Festival and July 4th, and is a visible and popular public forum for the expression and demonstration of 1st Amendment views, with close to 3000 permits issued each year. The park is managed to allow space for recreational activities such as sporting events, bicycling, and picnicking.

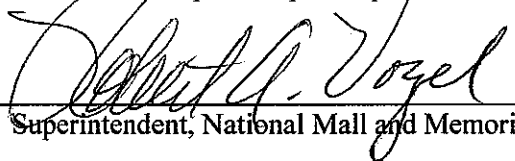
The airspace above the portion of the park along the Mall and north to K Street is classified as prohibited for operation of aircraft without specific permission. The remainder of the park falls within the closely regulated airspace associated with the major airports in the area, as well as the Washington, DC, Air Defense Identification zone. The area of the park between Reagan International Airport and the prohibited flight area is used by military and government helicopters, including those carrying the President of the United States, to navigate around the busy airport. The uptown parks, circles, squares and reservations are in residential areas, close to multi-story buildings, and in the busy urban environment. Osprey and bald eagles, among other migratory birds, feed and roost in the park.

The National Park Service has not had sufficient time to adequately determine the effect and impact of this use of unmanned aircraft in the National Mall and Memorial Parks on the atmosphere of solemnity and reverence as well as scenic values of the memorials and monuments; the safety of visitors walking, bicycling and driving in and through the park; the expression of 1st Amendment views; the impact on wildlife and the safety; and security of official aircraft that operate over and in the park.

The launching and retrieval of unmanned aircraft, as distinguished from that of the operation of model aircraft (prohibited under 36 CFR 7.96 without a permit), is a new use and subject to the requirements of the National Park Service *Management Policies 2006*, Sections 1.5 and 8.1, "Appropriate Use." Before a

new use can be allowed, it must be assessed to determine if it is "(1) appropriate to the purpose for which the park was established, and (2) can be sustained without causing unacceptable impacts." (*Management Policies 2006*, Section 8.1.1) Since that required assessment and evaluation has not yet been done, less restrictive methods involving the launching and retrieval of unmanned aircraft are not appropriate.

Notice of this temporary and partial closure and public use limitation will be made through media advisories, maps and posting at conspicuous locations in the affected park areas as required by 36 CFR 1.7. This determination is available to the public upon request.

 August 13, 2014

Superintendent, National Mall and Memorial Parks